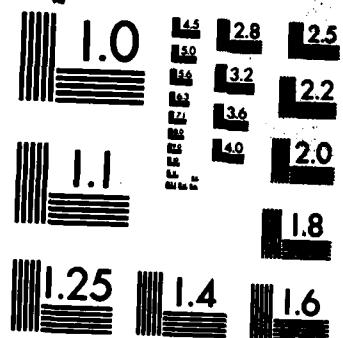


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THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE CAAC (CIVIL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION OF CHINA)

The Japanese journal, "Aviation Magazine", Number 9, 1984, published an article written by Aoki Hinode, introducing the history of development and current changes in the CAAC. Now we translate it into Chinese for readers' reference. Please note that publishing this translated article does not mean that the editors agree with the author's viewpoint or confirm his report, but just offer our readers some information about the overseas comments on our commercial aviation business.

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MOST PASSENGERS WHO RECENTLY USED THE SERVICE OF THE CAAC SAID: "THE CAAC IS CHANGING".

CAAC is Changing

First, the types of airplanes are changing. Before, the CAAC mainly possessed old-type Russian planes which people did not like to ride. Occasionally, the CAAC bought a new type plane, but just limited to British manufacturers. Recently, Boeing jet planes, especially the wide body jet planes, which are so popular in other countries, are beginning to appear in Chinese airports. People naturally think that the CAAC is changing.

The service in the planes is also changing greatly. Recent service in the planes is quite good and close to western airlines; at least smiling faces can be seen. Meals served in the planes are improved; water is no longer served in large kettles, but in small pots. Although it is not essential to serve water in either large kettles or small pots, the important thing is the smiling faces; this is a very big event.

After all, the general opinion that the CAAC's service is poor is very popular until now. The harsh attitude of stewardesses,

low efficiency, out-of-date equipment, and so on, and so forth; they are too many to be counted. If the situation is really improved, it will be very good news.

Before when people said the CAAC was not good, it meant not only the harsh attitude of the stewardesses and the tasteless meal in the planes, but also the long waiting time for luggage check-out after landing, such as in the Shanghai and Peking airports. Furthermore, nobody would help you with the transfer; you could not buy roundtrip tickets. When you used local airline service, it was very difficult to buy tickets for the next destination. Maybe the reason for this was the conflict between modern air transportation and the old system of the CAAC.

All these problems are also common in the Soviet Union, Eastern European and African countries. But they were more prominent in China. Since China got rid of the chaos of the Cultural Revolution, it is now accelerating its procedures of modernization. But the organization and tradition which were founded over a long time are not easily changed. The administration is trying to change the current situation by an announcement of the "month of civilization" drive, but I think things are not so easy. If the situation is really changing, it will be a big progress. We will watch it with great concern.

Therefore, I think we should study again the scale of the CAAC and what they are doing each day. Reported here is an introduction to the recent situation of the CAAC.

The CAAC includes the whole commercial aviation of China

The Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) is an organization which controls all Chinese commercial airlines. It is quite different from normal airlines; it is equal to the traffic department of the Transportation Ministry of the Japanese government. From the policy-making of civil aviation and the control

of air transportation, to aviation equipment maintenance and repair, the management and selling business of passenger and cargo transportation, and the use and management of the runways and buildings of airports, all belong to the CAAC; that is: all things called civil aviation are under its control. In Japan, the scale includes the Air Transportation Bureau of the Transportation Ministry, airport corporations, the airport building company, commercial airlines and all kinds of related business companies and their auxiliary offices. It is like a large trust.

Acting as a government organization which administrates air transportation as well as an aviation company which is to be administrated, these two sides are combined into one. This situation is hard to understand in western countries. But this is very common in eastern countries because of the different social system. Under such a structure, there is only one airline which monopolizes all air transportation. Therefore, service could not be perfect.

The CAAC already has become a large organization. In a country with a total area of 9.6 million square kilometers (which is about 25 times the area of Japan and a little bit larger than the area of the United States), and a population of about one billion (which is about a quarter of the total population of the world), there is only one airline. Therefore, the forming of such a large organization is a natural thing.

Because the socialist countries have some data which are not permitted to be released to the public, the situation can only be estimated from the outside. This means it is difficult to report the situation accurately. This is also true for the case of the CAAC. It is only known that the CAAC has about 3.8 million passengers per year, about 50,000 employees, and about 500 airplanes.

For a commercial airline, 50,000 employees and 500 airplanes are already quite big numbers. In the western world, the largest

airline is United Airlines of the United States. It has 42,000 employees and 329 airplanes. Thus, the CAAC has a scale much larger than that of United Airlines which delivers about 33 million passengers each year. Of course, the proper standard which can be used for comparison is difficult to make. What this large number of employees is doing now in such a large organization is not very clear. For the aircraft, all professional aviation from training planes to helicopters is possibly included in the total number of airplanes.

The Soviet Union is a similar example; they have a half-million employees and 7000 airplanes, delivering 120 million passengers each year (including 2.7 million international passengers). Although the Russian airline is the largest in the world, their employee body and airplane fleet are still too large. The Russian airline also includes all the manpower from the administration of air transportation to airport administration, and, of course, also include planes for special task aviation and helicopters. Just the number of helicopters will count about 2000. Therefore, using such a number as a standard of comparison might not be appropriate.

The airlines in the Soviet Union and eastern European countries have different considerations on spare planes. Although the utilization of airplanes is not high, this shortage can be compensated by more spare planes. Therefore, they have more planes than western airlines. There are many aspects which need to be compared, but only considering that the CAAC has about 200 medium and larger planes (50 or more passengers) will lead to the conclusion that the CAAC has quite a scale.

The renewing of airplanes

In the early years after the founding of China, although the CAAC was under the control of the government and got aid from Russia, China was isolated internationally. In such a large land,

the capability of the CAAC was very weak. It only had a few Air Kings and DC4s which were taken over from the China National Aviation Company (CNAC) plus Li-2s and Ilyushin-18s supplied by the Soviet Union.

Until 1960, the CAAC still did not reach the level of the CNAC in 1947. There were at least two or three flights between important cities, such as Peking and Shanghai, Peking and Canton. The longest route was from Hankou to Nanking which was 1000 kilometers. The only international airline was from Peking to Irkutsk flown by Ilyushin-18s leased from the Soviet Union.

In order to increase the capability of air transportation, China tried to buy new planes from foreign countries, but it was not an easy thing for China at that time. First they bought Ilyushin-18s from Russia. Because of frequent engine trouble, the planes often could not be used normally. At last they had to send these planes back to Russia. Then in 1963 after a great endeavor, they bought six Viscount planes from Britain, but it was very difficult to deliver these planes to China because for Britain it was a matter of selling industrial products to a socialist country, plus the Taiwan problem. It was hard to predict if any problems would happen.

Britain considered such problems, they did not print marks in the planes and delivered these unmarked planes to Hong Kong secretly. In March 1964, China began test flying Viscount planes from Peking to Shanghai. The above situation is one of the factors which makes complicated the types of planes in the CAAC. According to rumor, the British sold these planes to China under international pressure at that time. China still does not forget that and is grateful to Britain for its bravery and good will. The deep relationship of the commercial aviation business between China and Britain has its source in that. The Ilyushin-18s with changed new engines appearing in the air routes of the CAAC are the next story.

In 1971, China began buying Ilyushin-62 jet planes from the Soviet Union. At that time, China and the Soviet Union were against each other and it was during the Cultural Revolution in China. People might feel that it was difficult to understand such a deal. Let us put aside political and commercial deals; it should be pointed out that these planes were introduced into China according to the 1970 China and Russia trade agreement. China bought about 20 Ilyushin-18s and five Ilyushin-62s. After that, China bought three Tridents from the British which were delivered formally since November 1972.

Before that the CAAC never used Trident planes. In 1970, China rented four Tridents from Pakistan to fly its domestic routes. After the new planes were bought, they used them alternately with the former ones. After that, China had altogether 33 Trident-2Es and two Trident-3Bs. Because the air force also uses these planes, therefore, currently the CAAC has 30 of these planes.

In 1972, the United States and China built a diplomatic relationship. China bought 10 Boeing-737 planes. These were delivered in 1974. After that, these planes became the main force of air transportation. They decided to make the American commercial planes the major planes to be imported from foreign countries. In 1980, three Boeing 747-SP planes were bought and the CAAC opened the Pacific lines with these planes.

The international routes of the CAAC have been developed gradually along with the modernization of the plane types. During the time of using the Ilyushin-14 and Ilyushin-18 planes, the CAAC only flew to Russia, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. After the introduction of Ilyushin-62s, it opened the air routes to the eastern European countries. After the introduction of Boeing's 707s, plus active foreign policies, it opened the Tokyo route, then mid-east routes, African routes and European routes, one by one, and also flew to the United States and The Philippines.

It can be seen that the CAAC recently is still actively using new type planes to fly its domestic and international routes. They have ordered 10 Boeing 737s altogether. The first batch was ready to be put into service in the spring of 1983. They replaced the Viscounts which had already flown for 20 years. At the end of 1983, they introduced two MD-82 planes from McDonnell-Douglass Company, and they also have some transfer and compensation contracts. Therefore, the CAAC is accelerating the process of plane-type renewing. Of course, the long distance big planes are also increasing, for example, the Boeing 747-SP and the Boeing-747-200 mixed type were increased one each. (Unfinished, continued in the next issue).

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